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FOR WHA/CCA

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SUBJECT: CUBA: JAPAN'S RESPONSE TO LIBERTAD ACT QUESTIONS

REF: STATE 65523

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor W. Michael Meserve for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

(C) In response to reftel request, U.S. Embassy Economic Officer met May 17 with the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry's Latin America and Caribbean Office Assistant Director Yusuke Suzuki, and Embassy Political Officer met May 23 with Ministry of Foreign Affairs Mexico and Central America Division Cuba Desk Officer Fusae Tsunoda to discuss Japan-Cuba relations.

Below are answers to specific questions raised in reftel.

Q. What is the nature of investments (and names, if known) that host country businesses have in Cuba?

A. There has been no new Japanese investment in Cuba over the past six months.

Q. Are there any bilateral trade agreements between host country and Cuba?

A. Japan-Cuba trade is governed by the Japan-Cuba Trade Agreement of 1960. Japan has no plans for new economic agreements with Cuba. Two-way trade since the March 2006 has ranged between JPY 1.2 billion (USD 10 million) and JPY 1.5 billion (USD 12 million) per month in exports and JPY 100 million (USD 833,000) to JPY 300 million (USD 2.5 million) per month in imports. There was a spike of exports of JPY 3.6 billion yen (USD 30 million) in March 2007, the most recent statistics available, but no specific reason was given. Total trade in the first quarter of 2007 was JPY 6.4 billion (USD 53 million) in exports and JPY 391 million (USD 3.13 million) in imports. Major imports are shrimp and small-scale commodities. Exports consist primarily of electronics and medical equipment.

A Cuban Trade mission is currently in Japan seeking to purchase medical devices and other related goods for equipping four new hospitals in Cuba. The purchases will be conducted on market terms.

Q. Are there any exchange programs between host country and Cuba?

A. Japan gives academic scholarships to 2-3 college students every year, part of a world-wide program. In addition, relationships between individual universities in Havana and Tokyo involve student exchanges.

Q. Has the host country, in Post's opinion, worked to promote the advancement of democracy and human rights in Cuba?

A. Japan has made no significant effort to promote human rights or democracy in Cuba during the last six months, but Japan raises its concerns about human rights every year during the annual bilateral political summit, held most recently in Tokyo last November. This year's summit will be held in Havana at the end of the year.

Q. Have there been any high-level diplomatic visits between Cuba and host country in the past six months?

A. The only high ranking visits in the past six months was the visit by Japanese Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs Ms. Midori Mastushima, who visited Cuba as part of a tour to Mexico and the Caribbean in May 2003. While there, she met with Cuban Foreign Minister Felipe Perez Roque.

SCHIEFFER